

Tips for Club Membership

Here are a few tips to attract new members and retain current members:

- Provide good educational programs using club members, and guest speakers.
- Take care of presenters - Establish a policy to pay any reasonable out of pocket expenses for the speaker.
- Provide Outdoor trips which stimulate interest in the outdoors and camaraderie amongst the members.
- At the beginning or end of each meeting invite members to share their nature experiences. Member participation keeps interest alive.
- Establish Club projects such as trail maintenance or restoring a marsh to involve volunteer activity within the club. Establish a watchdog committee for any sensitive habitats within the community.
- Create a Publicity Committee to promote local meetings, outdoors trips, report on local educational topics and successful projects. The Publicity Committee should also create letters of concern re local issues to the media and any of the appropriate levels of government, to be signed by the Club President.
- Club Business: Have the Club Executive take care of most of the club business. If any business is carried out at the regular meetings have it as the last item on the Agenda. Most members will come for the educational program and you shouldn't keep the speaker or the members waiting.
- At the regular meeting- Meet and Greet members. Have the Club President welcome visitors and new members. Refreshments encourage mixing.
- Start and finish your meetings on time.
- Create a permanent sign indicating BC Nature-"Club Name" -meets here-time-date (example 7 pm Second Tues in the month) Use the BC Nature Logo and *Motto "Know Nature and Keep it Worth Knowing"* as part of the sign. Most communities have signs entering your community ie; "Rotary Club" "Lions Club" – why not a "Nature Club (Club Name)"
- Establish a "Bring a Guest Campaign".
- Create a Membership Committee. Club Executive to have a regular item on the Agenda titled Membership, so that the issue is never forgotten.

- Give away memberships to local naturalists and dignitaries. Encourage them to present and participate, with the hope that they will become active members when their membership renewal time comes
- Potluck suppers are an enjoyable social event to encourage new members – have a potluck with “bring a guest” night. Be sure to put a display table together of all the positive things your club does.
- Interact with other clubs. Idea sharing and cost sharing on joint events has far reaching effects with increasing interest in both clubs.
- Be more involved with your community – ie; all communities have mall events where displays can be set up etc. “awareness” is half the battle of bringing in new members.
- Try to be well rounded - encourage a botany night or a birder’s night, hikers night etc. --- try to mix the themes up so as to encourage all forms of naturalists to attend.
- Be involved with the YNC in your area – parents of the YNC youngsters make great additions to your club and the youngsters in the club (which are your future naturalists) are a natural new member as they outgrow the YNC clubs.
- Universities-Colleges etc. are a great starting point to bring in younger members with fresh ideas and the enthusiasm to volunteer (they don’t have much money – but are willing to put the time in for a favorite pastime). Holding your meetings at a College or University gives greater access to young people
- Be open minded in your club – just because you’ve always done it “that” way does not make it current anymore – if you want new members you have to be flexible. They are the lifeblood of your club.
- Submit “well written, interesting” articles to your local newspaper on a variety of subjects in the “Natural History” world.
- Don’t be afraid to ask for help from BC Nature or other clubs – use the network! Collective causes bring unity to your members and the old adage “two heads are better than one” is very true with our clubs.